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White House Hunts a Leak

Washington, Jan. 5 (NEWS Bureau) — Disturbed Nixon administration officials admitted today, after a two-week intensive manhunt, that they have failed to uncover the source of the most sensational leak of White House secrets in modern history.

The secrets, revealing in now painful detail the inner debates of the National Security Council's Washington Special Action Group at the peak of the Indo-Pakistan war, were wrapped up in three long memoranda for the record.

White House Silent

Syndicated columnist Jack Anderson released texts of the memos to the press generally today. He has been quoting segments of them in occasional columns for two weeks.

The White House, which is directing the search for the leak, refused comment on the case. But in private officials expressed grave concern that sensitive government information distributed only on a "need to know" basis could become public so swiftly.

There was no denial of the authenticity of the documents.

Anderson, amused at the administration's discomfort, said the papers came from high sources, and added, "If the sources were identified, it would embarrass the administration more than it would me."

FBI Makes Check

An official close to the manhunt denied that a "high source" was involved with the leak but would not amplify the statement.

The FBI, asked to assist the search, has made a cursory check but because of the small number

of top level officials who were present at the Special Action Group meetings, has not launched an intensive investigation — yet.

The case is considered of vastly greater importance than that of Daniel Ellsberg and the Pentagon papers, because it is undeniable evidence that someone with a pipeline to innermost White House consultations has other than the interests of President Nixon at heart.

However, because of the nature of the documents, and despite their super-sensitivity, it was suggested by some officials that the individual concerned probably would not be prosecuted, but merely fired, if his identity became known.

The memos were records of notes of the Special Action Group meetings on Dec. 3, 4 and 6, not official transcripts. While the papers were stamped "secret sensitive," they did not include, as did the Pentagon papers, cop-

ies of cables, orders, directives and official recommendations.

The administration was caught flat-footed with no warning of a leak on Dec. 14 when the first Anderson column appeared, quoting notes about meetings held barely a week earlier. The quotes were authenticated quickly and the hunt for the source was begun.

One official said that to date, the case has been regarded as an "administrative" affair and not a cause for criminal action.

There were 11 officials at the first meeting and 19 at each of the next two. Henry Kissinger, foreign affairs adviser to the President, presided at all three meetings, and Central Intelligence Agency Director Richard Helms was present at all of them, but representatives from the State Department and the Pentagon varied.

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